



# **Board of Supervisors**

Story County, Iowa

## **Temporary Employment Practices and Policies in Response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

**Approval Date:**  
03/27/2020

**Effective Date:**

03/27/2020

**Revision No:**

03

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**Distribution:**

Intranet, S:drive; Policy Book

### **General Policy Statement**

This policy is intended to address multiple Story County employment-related policies on a temporary basis to ensure the health and safety of Story County employees while providing for continuity of services to Story County residents. The purpose of this policy is to implement various employment-related practices on a temporary basis, that are consistent with OSHA and CDC recommendations for employers while still ensuring the continuity of Story County government.

### **Scope**

This policy is applicable to the following:

All Story County employees responsible to the Story County Board of Supervisors;

All Story County employees responsible to a County elected office holder who has adopted the policy.

All Story County employees not directly responsible to either the Board of Supervisors or a county elected office holder and whose governing body and the Board of Supervisors has certified its applicability.

### **Employee Infection Control Practices**

Story County expects all employees to adhere to the infection control policies outlined in the policy and also communicated to employees through an email sent by the Board of Supervisors Chair, Linda Murken on March 12, 2020. Practices outlined in this policy were developed by recommendations from the CDC and Iowa Department of Public Health. The practices include but are not limited to:

- Engage in respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene while in the workplace
  - Hand hygiene includes washing hands often with soap and water for at least twenty (20) seconds.
  - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue (dispose of it immediately) or your upper arm/elbow.
  - Avoid touching your face.
- Immediately advise management/supervisory staff if employees have any of the following symptoms:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath
- Provide appropriate notification and stay home from work if symptomatic of COVID-19
- Cooperate with department/offices management regarding staffing coverage for absences related to illness of other employees. This may include working additional hours so symptomatic employees may remain isolated from the workplace, working various duties that are not normally performed by your position and assisting other departments/offices that are experiencing staff shortages.

Employees are further required to comply with any specific department/office rules implemented for infection control purposes within the workplace.

### **Story County Infection Control Practices**

Story County will implement the following practices in an effort to eliminate/reduce exposure to COVID-19 and for infection control purposes.

- Eliminate all non-essential work travel. This includes, but is not limited to travel to conferences, trainings, non-essential meetings with various organizations, or other gatherings.
- Eliminate all non-essential staff meetings, trainings or employee events.
- Make available cleaning products for routine environmental cleaning of work areas (cleaning to be done by staff within the respective department or office).
- Eliminate non-essential gatherings of ten (10) or more individuals.
- Utilize electronic means to conduct public meetings unless conducting Public Hearings required by the Iowa Code.
- Use responsible social distancing practices.

### **Identification and Isolation of Employees with COVID-19 Symptoms**

In order to protect the health and safety of all Story County employees prompt identification and isolation of potentially infected employees or individuals is critical. Information concerning COVID-19 has been distributed to all employees and will be displayed within worksites. Employees or individual within any Story County worksites exhibiting symptoms including, but not limited to those identified as being associated with COVID-19 must be immediately isolated from others at the worksite. Employees exhibiting the symptoms at the workplace will also be required to self-quarantine at their home and encouraged to seek medical testing and treatment. If the severity of an employee's condition warrants, emergency medical personnel may need to be contacted.

Story County will follow the protocol sent forth by the Iowa Department of Public Health concerning exposure and quarantine requirements. Symptomatic employees should remain at home until they are free of fever (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater using an oral thermometer) or other symptoms for at least seventy-two (72) hours without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medication.

### **Paid Leave for COVID-19 Isolation, Testing and/or Recovery**

Symptomatic employees who are sent home or otherwise require to miss work for purpose of isolation, testing, treatment and/or recover from COVID-19 related symptoms may receive up to a maximum of eighty (80) hours of paid leave if classified as full-time. Part-time employees will receive leave on a pro-rated basis dependent on employment status ( $\frac{1}{4}$  time,  $\frac{1}{2}$  time,  $\frac{3}{4}$  time). Temporary employees/interns will receive a number of hours paid leave equal to the number of hours that such employee works, on average, over a 2-week period. This leave will be tracked separately from an employee's sick leave. Employees will only be able to use this leave for the purpose of isolation, testing, treatment and/or recovery from COVID-19 related symptoms. Employees may utilize necessary sick leave benefits if symptoms and medical recovery exceed the COVID-19 paid leave (80 hours for full-time or pro-rated hours for part-time). The County will also provide any additional paid sick leave benefits and FMLA expansion mandated by the COVID-19 Coronavirus Response Act approved by the federal government. Once an employee is symptom free for seventy-two (72) hours and/or the Iowa Department of Public Health or other medical provider has cleared an employee to return to work the employee is expected to immediately return to work.

Staff should stay home and isolate themselves from others in the following situations:

- Taken a cruise anywhere in the world in the last 14 days.

- Traveled internationally to a country with a level 3 travel warning in the last 14 days.
- Recently traveled outside of Iowa per the Governor's recommendation on March 21, 2020.
- Close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case in the last 14 days.

Exceptions to this may be made to allow essential staff return to work that can't work remotely without isolation and/or if determined that the employee's risk of exposure was minimal: avoided crowds, did not travel by public conveyance (airplane, bus, etc.). This will be determined by the respective department head or elected official. Every effort will be made to isolate the essential employee within the worksite.

Employees will also be allowed to utilize the COVID-19 leave if the fall within one of the six categories listed in the expanded paid sick leave provision of the FFCRA

- The employee is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation ordered related to COVID-19.
- The employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
- The employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis.
- The employee is caring for an individual who subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation ordered related to COVID-19 or been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
- The employee is caring for a son or daughter of such employee if the school or place of care of the son or daughter has been closed, or the child care provider of such son or daughter is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions.
- The employee is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Labor.

Story County trusts that its employees will not abuse this benefit, especially during a time in which all available asymptomatic essential employees will be needed to ensure the continuity of Story County government. Any employee found to violate

this trust by abusing this benefit shall be subject to immediate discipline up to and including termination of employment.

### **Leave for Employees in Identified High-Risk Categories**

Employees in essential positions requiring their presence at the worksite who fall into one of the high-risk categories as determined by the CDC may request the department/office to provide an alternate/modified work assignment or leave to accommodate their underlying risk factor(s). Departments/offices will accommodate the leave request to the greatest extent feasible, consistent with the operation continuity of the department/office. If the leave is granted, the employee may utilize any accrued leave (sick, vacation, comp, etc.). If an employee does not have available accrued leave, the employee may be granted unpaid leave.

Employees with disabilities seeking employment-related accommodations may do so in accordance with Story County EEO/ADA Policy. Departments and offices are asked to work with Human Resources when accommodations are requested.

### **Expanded Emergency Paid Family Leave**

- **Caring for Family Members**

Employees providing direct care for an individual that has been subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation ordered related to COVID-19 or been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19 may request time off from work from their immediate supervisor. Leave will be granted by individual departments/offices based on staffing needs in accordance with the FFCRA. Employees may use the eighty (80) hours of COVID-19 leave as specified above in the memorandum of understanding for the first two weeks of leave. After the COVID-19 leave is exhausted, an employee may use any accrued leave (sick, vacation, comp, etc.) for the remaining absence. If an employee has no accrued leave available, leave without pay will be granted.

- **Caring for individual due to daycare or school closure**

Employees who are obligated to care for immediate family members, children or elderly, due to closures in the community (i.e. schools, child and adult daycares) because of the COVID-19 pandemic may request time off from work from their immediate supervisors. Leave will be granted by individual departments/offices based on staffing needs in accordance with the FFCRA. Employees may use the eighty (80) hours of COVID-19 leave as specified above in the memorandum of understanding for the first two weeks of leave. If an employee is unable to return after the COVID-19 leave

has been exhausted, they will receive 2/3 of their normal pay for up to an additional 400 hours. Employees may use accrued any accrued leave (sick, vacation, comp, etc.) to cover the additional 1/3 pay.

The emergency expansion of FMLA does not give an additional twelve weeks of FMLA to employees. It allows them to utilize FMLA for the reasons specified above.

### **Insurance Benefits During Unpaid Leave**

Story County will maintain monthly premium contributions while an employee is on unpaid leave due to Covid-19. This includes monthly health insurance and flexible benefit contributions. Employees will continue to pay their contribution through payroll or by separate payment.

### **Telework**

Story County departments and offices must determine what positions are required to be physically present at a work site in order to maintain basic minimum services necessary for continuity of ongoing operations.

Consistent with OSHA recommendation that employers implement policies, such as telecommuting, designed to limit contact between individuals to mitigate spread, departments and offices may permit staff to work remotely to the extent the position duties are able to be performed at the employee's home. Determination as to whether a position is capable of being performed remotely is solely at the discretion of the department/office. Employees that are authorized to work remotely will agree to the terms of the telework agreement attached to this policy. Employees may be granted VPN access and schedules set up for access due to network capabilities. Authorization for VPN access will only be granted by the department head or elected official and allocated as approved by the Board of Supervisors.

### **Contingent Staffing Plans**

Departments and offices are encouraged to consult with Human Resources to develop contingent staffing plans that will ensure sufficient staffing levels for the continuity of operations. Staff may be asked to assist other departments/offices that are experiencing staffing shortages due to COVID-19. Contingent staffing plans will be department/office specific and designed to address the specific operation continuity needs of that department/office.

The Board of Supervisors reserves the right to amend/alter this policy as situations develop due to COVID-19. This policy is non-precedent setting and was implemented specifically to address the County's needs during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.